



Diane Tradd
Assistant City Manager/Director

Eric Slagle
Director

DEVELOPMENT SERVICES MEMORANDUM

DATE: April 29, 2016

TO: Chairman Linnehan and Members of the Planning Board

CC: Eric Slagle, Director of Development Services
Shaun Shanahan, Building Commissioner
Judy Tymon, Senior Planner
Joseph Giniewicz, Associate Planner
Geoff Schembechler, Applicant

FROM: Christine McCall, Assistant Planner

RE: 374-386 Chelmsford Street

PROJECT SUMMARY

Geoff Schembechler is seeking Site Plan Review approval at 374-386 Chelmsford Street. The proposal is to expand and upgrade the existing Domino's Pizza to create additional parking spaces and a new drive-through window. The proposed project is located in the Regional Retail (RR) zoning district and requires Site Plan Review approval under Sec. 11.4 from the Planning Board.

DEVELOPMENT SERVICES

1. The applicant proposes to expand and upgrade the existing Domino's Pizza to create additional parking spaces and a new drive-through window. The applicant proposes to join a vacant lot (386 Chelmsford) with the existing business located at 374 Chelmsford Street.
2. The applicant also proposes to construct an addition that increases the total square footage of the business to approximately 2,300 sq ft. The threshold to be considered a 'carry-out' restaurant is 1,500 sq ft.
3. The existing site has 6 parking spaces. The revised Site Plan dated 4/27/16, proposes 36 (8 employee & 26 customer) parking spaces. With the proposed addition, the required amount of parking spaces is 48.
4. Section 6.1.9 encourages development to include live shade trees opposed to arbor vitae for landscaped open space. The revised Site Plan dated 4/27/16 includes a landscape plan that includes live shade trees versus the arborvitae shown in the Site Plan dated 1/25/16.
5. The proposed expansion and addition keeps in character with the existing neighborhood. The subject property is located in the Regional Retail (RR) Zoning District. There are numerous other drive-through businesses in this corridor.

6. The applicant has stated that all utilities needed for the expanded building currently exist including water, sewer, electricity, and gas. Should additional utilities need to be required, they must be installed according to city and state standards.
 - The City Engineer must be contacted for all site inspections. This includes drainage, paving, water, and sewer services.
7. According to the revised Site Plan dated 4/27/16, the applicant intends to remove and replace all existing pavement with porous pavement (this also includes the proposed parking area). The applicant did provide a drainage analysis addressed to the City Engineer dated 1/25/16. The Board may wish to require the applicant to submit a detailed maintenance plan for the porous pavement prior to receiving a paving permit from the Engineer's Office.
8. The Board may wish to ask the applicant to clarify the following:
 - Dimensions of the existing curb-cut at the exit
 - Dimensions of the proposed painted fire lane
9. The existing business on 374 Chelmsford Street currently shares a driveway with an abutting apartment building (368 Chelmsford) with their sole access through the Domino's parking lot. Per section 6.7.4, common driveways are only allowed for residential lots.
 - The Planning Board may consider asking the applicant to record an access easement against the property for 368 Chelmsford Street (apartment).
 - It is not clear on the Site Plan dated 4/24/16 where the proposed 6-foot fence will end. The Board may wish to ask the applicant if they plan to fence off the abutting apartment building's parking lot.
 - For fire safety purposes that lot should not be fenced off.
 - For access management along Chelmsford Street, the Transportation Engineer wishes to see the driveway be one-way in a counter-clockwise direction just like the neighboring fast-food restaurants. Please see below for more detailed commentary from the Transportation Engineer.
 - The Fire Department approves the traffic flow as shown on the revised Site plan dated 4/27/16.
 - Since there is not enough room for a separate lane for the abutting apartment building, a fire access lane, and an exit for the restaurant. The Board needs to decide how they want to condition the Site Plan to allow for the proposed uses.
10. The applicant will need to seek relief from the Zoning Board of Appeals for the following:
 - Special Permit for use of a drive-through window
 - Variance for parking: 48 spaces are required, only 26 customer spaces are provided.

Lowell Fire Department Comments:

The revised Site Plan, dated 4/27/16, will satisfy the Fire Department's requirements.

Transportation Engineer Comments:

The driveway should be one-way in a counter-clockwise direction just like the neighboring fast-food restaurants. The reason is to have fewer conflicts with the neighboring access points and less opportunities for conflicts with the flow of traffic. Access management along Chelmsford Street is necessary for congestion and safety reasons.

There is also an issue regarding the abutting apartment building (368 Chelmsford St) which has a parking lot with its sole access through the Domino's parking lot. This is a highly unusual and undesired condition for reasons of safety and zoning. The purpose of zoning is to separate residential and commercial uses to decrease congestion and conflicts. Per section 6.7.4, common driveways are only allowed for residential lots.

Applicant stated he tore down the fence separating the two parcels about 10 years ago – probably without a permit – to create the new driveway. The proposed redevelopment of the parcel provides the opportunity to correct this issue by perhaps separating the access for these two uses. The applicant should be encouraged to provide options to separate the apartment building's access if possible or otherwise mitigate this condition. The apartment building's driveway is not shown on the plans.